

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TRIPOL 01139 171221Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TRIPOLI 1139

EXDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, LY, US
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS IN US-LIBYAN DIALOGUE

REF: TRIPOLI 1138

1. IN LIGHT OF MY MEETING WITH LIBYAN CHARGE MADFAI AUG 16, DURING WHICH HE CONVEYED QADHAFT'S DESIRE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF US-LIBYAN RELATIONS, I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS RE WHAT FURTHER STEPS WE AND THEY MIGHT NOW TAKE. GIVEN QADHAFT'S RECORD, THERE ARE GROUNDS FOR SKEPTICISM RE HIS BASIC INTENTIONS. AT SAME TIME, HE SEEMS GENUINELY TO DESIRE A BETTER BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY WITH A LESSENING DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD TERRORISM HAS, WITH EXPERIENCE, CHANGED, THOUGH NOT AS FAR AS WE MIGHT LIKE. WE CANNOT EXPECT A MAJOR SHIFT IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ARAB-ISRAEL ISSUE, BUT THE SIDE OF HIS NATURE WHICH WANTS PEACE IN THE AREA MIGHT BE REINFORCED BY A DIALOGUE THAT WOULD PLACE HIM EVENTUALLY AT ABOUT WHERE THE ALGERIANS ARE WITH: "WHATEVER THE PALESTINIANS WILL ACCEPT."

2. MADFAI, AND PRESUMABLY QADHAFT, DID NOT RAISE THE
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QUESTION OF THE BOEINGS. WE KNOW FROM OTHER SOURCES, HOWEVER, THAT THIS ISSUE IS CONSIDERED A WATERSHED IN US-LIBYAN RELATIONS. IF WE DENY THE CIVILIAN BOEINGS, WE WILL BE SEEN TO BE CLOSING THE DOOR TO A POSSIBLE DIALOGUE. IF A DECISION IS TAKEN TO PERMIT THE SALE TO GO AHEAD, WITH WHATEVER CONDITION RE USE WE MIGHT MAKE, I BELIEVE IT COULD BE USED TO OBTAIN FURTHER ASSURANCES

REGARDING LIBYAN BEHAVIOR ON TERRORISM AND PERHAPS
OTHER ISSUES. OF COURSE LIBYAN PERFORMANCE MIGHT NOT
ALWAYS MATCH THEIR STATEMENTS, BUT A BEGINNING HAS TO
BE MADE SOMEWHERE.

3. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT SOMETIME DURING THE
MONTH OF SEPTEMBER WE BE IN A POSITION TO TELL THE
LIBYANS THAT WE HAVE HEARD THEIR MESSAGE, AND, IN
ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THE DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION IN
THE FIELD OF TERRORISM, WE ARE PERMITTING THE SALE OF
BOEINGS TO GO FORWARD.

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